1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
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276 Certain barks are chewed as if they were stimulants, but it is questionable whether they have any effect other than in the imagination of the chewer. The most notable example [194] is a hot and highly scented bark called *Pota*, used by *Baigona* men, i.e. the exponents of the almost extinct cult of snakes. But one might suppose that if the product had any genuinely stimulant properties it would have come into wider use.

[531]

FIG. 13. *Porn* or Bamboo Pipe. Incised and partly scraped, the scraped surfaces being shaded.

Satiri or *Poki* (Fork)—The V-shaped cut in the top of a building post.
Tono—A kind of tree snake.
Papau—The hole made in a branch by a boring insect.

1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
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dreamer travels, it is not necessarily implied that it is visible, and this brings us to another meaning of the word, and necessitates a widening of definition. We may say that the *asisi* is an immaterial entity, not necessarily visualized, but identified with, or acting as substitute for, some person, in this case the dreamer. Thus when Dasiga, the visionary of Manau,[1] received his commandments, it was his *asisi* that went up into the sky and saw God, and such a use of the word is not due to any external suggestion, as, e.g. of Christianity, but is typical of Orokaiva usage. Dasiga does not have a cut-and-dried theory for a 'soul' which leaves his body for the time being as a mere inanimate clod while it travels the skies; he believes that he himself ascended in immaterial form. His *asisi* is merely a substitute for himself in Dasiga's own mind; for he has never thrashed the matter out and formulated a definite theory of body, soul, and spirit. Such a conception is not limited in reference to human beings. Animals and inanimate objects may also have their *asisi*. When, for instance, a hunting magician feels a certain sensation in his right side, 'like the kicking of an unborn puppy in its mother's belly', he says that it is the *asisi* of a pig which has entered him. We must not press him too closely for a definition of the form of *asisi*. He has not thought this out and he cannot explain. He thinks that the pig has come to him in some form or other, altogether immaterial unless it be for that slight throbbing in his side. Again, when a mourner declares that the *asisi* of the dead is immanent in the mourning jacket of *baja* (Job's Tears), he has no definite idea of how it got there or of what form it takes, except that it is obviously both immaterial and invisible.

The best example of the reference of *asisi* to inanimate nature is found in the doctrines of the Taro Cult, whose originators were possessed by the *asisi* of the *ba*, or taro, itself. And it is instructive to note, as illustrating the confused conception of the form of the *asisi*, that the originator of the cult saw the spirits of the actual taro plants in the shape of young men who danced before him.

[1] See 'Taro Cult' in *Orokaiva Magic*, pp. 74 ff.

1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
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assume such a form, viz. that of some creature of the forest or stream (*vide* pp. 269, 272), so that whoever eats snake, cuscus, lizard, and so forth—even bush-pig—does so at a certain risk. The creature may be an ordinary specimen of its kind, or it may be a *sovai*. In the latter event the man who eats it is in all probability stricken down with illness. The exponents of the *Baigona*, or 'snake cult', which had a vogue in the Northern Division some fifteen years ago, made great play with this belief in animal reincarnation. Not only snakes but a great variety of animals and reptiles were held sacred, and fundamentally their sacred character was due to the fact that they were reincarnations of the dead. Any one, therefore, who killed and ate, or even offended one of these creatures, e.g. by neglecting to hail it respectfully, would incur the anger of the *sovai* which it embodied, and fall sick in consequence. Such cases constituted the peculiar province of the *Baigona* healers, who professed to be able to entice the *sovai* out of the sufferer's body. It is not altogether remarkable that although the *Baigona* was practically stamped out as a cult more than ten years ago there should still be practitioners (some of them actually retaining the title of *Baigona*-men) who continue to make use of methods and theories which are so firmly founded on old belief.

Sorcery Diseases.

From diseases caused by malevolent *sovai* we may turn to the last category, viz. that of diseases caused by sorcery.

It cannot be said that there is anything essentially distinctive in the symptoms of sorcery disease, though one may go so far as to say that it is the more mysterious and inexplicable of symptoms which call for this interpretation; and while it is true that when a native's anger or suspicion is aroused he is liable to strike out with a charge of sorcery for even the most trivial affliction, it remains the general rule to impute this cause only for the more serious complaints. Further than this, it is imputed as cause especially for those complaints which cannot be cured. Thus when a doctor has tried his methods on a patient without success he is likely to set the case down as a hopeless one of sorcery

2: Williams
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/For information on the Taro Cult, see category 116, pp. 3-98./

2: Williams E, G-5 (1923-1925) 1928
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APPENDIX

(Extract from a letter from Rev. E. Raff, Vila, New Hebrides)

10th Jan. 1924.

On Santo, one of the largest and the most northerly island of this group, we have had an outbreak of insanity very similar to that in the Gulf Division of Papua. Some years ago several 'prophets' arose and caused great unrest among the people prophesying a flood in which only the elect, i.e. their 'paid up' followers, would be saved and promising resurrections and a ship from Sydney filled with rice and trade goods.

A large house was built to receive these goods and on one occasion the people nearly took possession of a recruiting schooner in the belief that their ship had arrived. Every passing sail aroused great excitement and fire-signals from the anxious watchers posted on the beach. Emissaries of the chief prophet travelled far and wide over Santo and enrolled hundreds, perhaps thousands, who paid first pigs and later money, 5s. to £1, for the privilege and the promised benefits. In one quarter the plantation boys were convinced of the truth of the prophet's assertions, because, though he had never been to school, he could write 'language belong white man'. In evidence they produced a piece of paper scrawled with unintelligible marks.

Some of the natives heard that Ronovuro, the chief prophet, had raised a dead cow and at one of the 'sing sings' (dances) a follower who fell down 'dead' was promptly revived. But the promised resurrections were postponed time and time again, and at last it was given out that the 'whites' who were the cause of most deaths (except old age) on Santo were also preventing the resurrections and the cry became 'Santo for the Santoese' and ideas arose about driving out the whites.

Credence was given to this idea by an old story which became very popular. This old story told how, when at last a noted native murderer was done to death, all his victims came to life. The natural deduction was 'Kill the whites who have caused the deaths and the dead shall arise'. About sixteen months ago I was on Santo and things were then in a dangerous condition.

The culmination was a tragedy which occurred on the 24th of July of last year. Ronovuro was holding a great 'sing sing' at the conclusion of which the resurrections were to take place. Probably it was decided then that the Europeans were to die. A half-caste visited this 'sing sing' and was recognized by Ronovuro

2: Williams E, G-5 (1923-1925) 1928
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as his deceased son. The resurrection bodies were to be white skinned. The half-caste did not appreciate his adoption and took the first opportunity for flight. In the middle of the 'sing sing' Ronovuro's wife died and when all attempts to raise her to life failed, he declared that a planter named Clapcott was the cause and must be killed before she would come to life. Five men were sent to shoot this planter, who was an inoffensive man, deaf and in a very lonely place. He was shot, his body mutilated and parts of it eaten. The sequel to the tragedy was that six men were condemned, three including Ronovuro were executed, three were reprieved, and a number of other natives are in prison for sharing in the loot. There is a good probability that now the ringleader is out of the way the madness will soon disappear.

2: Williams E, G-5 (1923-1925) 1928
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that she had cut her thumb off. At that she said, 'Now I am a cuscus,' and ever since the animal has been remarkable for the queer little member which so resembles a truncated human thumb.

Sometimes dying leaves are snipped off the growing plant. In a ceremony of the new 'Taro cult' a band of excited men were pushing their way through the taro gardens, headed by one or two leaders who continually sprayed the plants with medicine from their mouths, and here and there as they passed snapped off large leaves. The reason for this, as the leaders themselves explained the matter, was that, as with a fully grown taro the outer leaves fall, it would expedite this development to anticipate it, and make the leaves fall now.

I do not know of any other kind of trimming or pruning, save sometimes in the interests of tidiness. On the whole garden plants, large and small, are left very much to themselves. Some exception, however, is made in the case of sugar-cane, the long stalks being bound together and supported by poles, lest they fall and so become a prey to rot and rat.

There seem, however, to be few recognized pests in the ordinary sense of the word; the principal enemies of the native horticulturist are not microbes but animals, bats, and birds. He must be constantly on guard against the bush-pig and minor foes—the flying fox, the rat, the wallaby, and the cockatoo, not to mention his fellow man. Formerly, in a kind of native Paradise where work was at a minimum, the bush-pig was content with bush food—roots and herbs and such-like. But exchanging confidences with the rat, he learnt that the latter's food was taro and succulent sugar-cane. After that he invaded the gardens, and it has been necessary ever since to build a fence.

The garden fence should properly surround the whole group of clan gardens. It is built in sections, each man being responsible for the part nearest his own garden. But the work is rather laborious, and the gardens are

2: Williams E, G-5 (1923-1925) 1928
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241 789 769 the spirits of the dead can influence the crops for good or ill. Hence to some extent come the practices of placating the dead with offerings (especially on small platforms, or *haraw*, set up in the actual gardens) and of exhorting the dead man just before burial to depart to a good place where there are pigs in plenty and taro in plenty, whence he may send pigs and taro to his surviving friends. Again, for some reason which remains obscure, the garden of the dead man is tabooed to his immediate friends, though it may be used by others. In general it is felt that the spirits of the dead can prosper the gardens or blast them, and it is worth while using all possible tact to avoid the latter alternative.

241 794 769 Within the last few years, however, a movement popularly known as the 'Taro cult' has swept through the whole of the Orokaiva country. As I have dealt with this movement in another report, it will not be necessary to make more than a passing reference to it here. Near the home of the cult, viz. about the mouth of the Mambare, it would seem that the original idea has held its ground: it is a cult of the spirit of the taro. But over the greater part of the Division the new movement has adapted itself in a very significant way to old belief. It is no longer a cult of the taro itself, but of the spirits of the dead who make the taro grow. The ceremonial, although constantly altered in some minor point by local Taro men, who desire merely to go one better than those from whom they have acquired it, has remained substantially the same. It consists especially of the *kasamba* (the singing, to the accompaniment of drums and conches, of songs which are meant to make the taro prosper); of feasting and entertaining with certain formalities and the use of special utensils; of treating the plants with certain medicines; of observing certain food taboos; sometimes of dancing; and always of simulating or surrendering to various kinds of bodily seizures. All these things are supposed to make the taro grow. In the whole cult, which with rare exceptions has been

2: Williams E, G-5 (1923-1925) 1928
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adopted by all the Orokaiva, there appears to be hardly any special practice that could in any way benefit the taro crop. Nevertheless, despite certain very undesirable features, the Taro cult does no serious amount of harm to those who practise it in moderation, and may perhaps actually benefit the taro in so far as it causes, if possible, more attention to be paid to the plant and its cultivation.

As there are magical methods used for the benefit of the gardens there are others which may be used, clandestinely, to its detriment. There is a tale of a village whose gardens failed again and again, despite all the industry of the villagers. Discouraged and mystified they decide to leave a small boy to watch for the putative sorcerer. Concealed under a pile of firewood the little spy observes a *sovai*—a devil-devil—decked with leaves and grass come dancing into the garden. He is hideously skinny and ugly, and as he performs his ungainly dance he sings *Utu nauko, kobo nauko, ebu tungako*, 'Like my leg, like my arm, like the neck of a drum', meaning that the taro will be poor and shrivelled, like his own scrawny limbs, or the slender grip of the drum which he beats. This, like most native stories, has a happy ending. The villagers lie in wait, and on his next appearance the *sovai* is seized, dispatched, and cast into a deep water, after which the gardens prosper as they should.

Whenever things go wrong unexplicably the native is prone to impute his misfortunes to a sorcerer. No doubt sorcery is supposed to be practised a hundred times more often than it is really practised. But there is one rather cunning method which may serve as an example of black magic at work in the garden. When a man finds that a thief has been making free with his taro, sugar-cane, or whatever it may be, he will look about for some remains of the stolen food, and then setting upright in the ground a length of springy stick, he will hold this fragment of food against the upper end, and, bending the stick back, shoot it out of the garden as if by means of a catapult. The effect of this is to make the thief a waster,

4: Chinnery & Haddon
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[For data on five nativistic movements see category 668.]